United Nations E/2004/3-E/ICEF/2004/4

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
18 November 2003

Original: English

Economic and Social Council
Substantive session of 2004
Item 3 (b) of the provisional agenda*
Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation: reports of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme

United Nations Children's Fund
Executive Board
First regular session 2004
19-23 and 26 January 2004
Item 3 of the provisional agenda**

Report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund: Annual report to the Economic and Social Council

Summary

The present report, which is prepared annually, covers a wide range of issues arising from the decisions of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, and provides a UNICEF perspective on these topics of system-wide interest. It is intended to be both informational and analytical; to describe actions taken and to stimulate discussion on actions to be taken; and to serve as a document in its own right and as a complement to similar reports by other members of the United Nations Development Group Executive Committee. The need to cover this broad diversity of requirements in a single document has necessitated a number of editorial decisions on emphasis and approach. It is anticipated that issues requiring a more detailed presentation or additional analysis and prescription will be the focus of discussions by the UNICEF Executive Board, the outcome of which will be reflected in the annual report of the Board to the Council. Issues of a substantive programmatic nature are generally covered in greater detail in the Executive Director's report, submitted to the Board at the Annual Session, or in other programmatic documentation.

* E/2004/100.
** E/ICEF/2004/2.

03-62087 (E) 041203

This report, together with an addendum containing the comments made by the members of the Executive Board during its first regular session of 2004, will be submitted to the Economic and Social Council for consideration at its substantive session of 2004.

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I. Implementation of the reform programme of the Secretary-General and the provisions of the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system

A. Structures and mechanisms

1. The United Nations Development Group (UNDG) has continued to expand its numbers and now consists of 25 full members and five observers. While there is a clear gain to the United Nations development system from the inclusion of nearly all United Nations entities with an interest in field-level operational activities, the sheer number of members, the number of New York-based meetings requiring active participation and the varying levels of commitment to agreed UNDG outcomes have created challenges. The four Executive Committee members, including UNICEF, are bound to the tasks and the outcomes of a UNDG work plan that responds to decisions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and recommendations of the Secretary-General. Other members, particularly specialized agencies, are responsible to their own intergovernmental bodies and, unless otherwise directed, can treat UNDG decisions as discretionary.

2. While the structure of UNDG support mechanisms is subject to regular zero-based reviews and the full UNDG meets only four to five times per year, meaningful participation in the full range of UNDG meetings has become a significant organizational overhead, particularly difficult for agencies not headquartered in New York. While all United Nations agencies will continue to strive for greater commonality of approach on the entire range of field delivery issues, there is an increasing recognition that UNICEF and the other Executive Committee members may, of necessity, adopt field-level practices as a group on its own or in advance of other agencies required to go through their own approval processes.

3. The strengthened role of the High-Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) and the High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM), as part of the new Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) structure, has led to an ever widening range of issues under their active consideration. While the UNDG is responsible for operational considerations, the HLCP and HLCM have in the last year addressed many policy issues with operational dimensions, including HIV/AIDS, food security and governance; follow-up to the Millennium Declaration, the World Summit on Social Development and the International Conference on Financing for Development; conflict prevention and the transition from crisis to development; and staff security. Active participation in both the CEB and UNDG machinery has enabled UNICEF to play a useful role in both the policy and operational dimensions of these important issues, ensuring that there is overall coherence between policy and operational aspects and that the children's dimension receives adequate attention.

B. Funding for operational activities for development of the United Nations system

4. The fourth pledging event in the context of the multi-year funding framework, held in January 2003, realized total pledges of $391.8 million, an annual increase of $67 million (21 per cent) and exceeding actual 2002 income by $26 million. A total of 62 countries pledged (up from 51) of which 30 were high-income, 16 middle-income and 16 low-income countries. As in previous years, high-income countries

constituted the vast bulk of funds pledged (99.2 per cent) and scope remains for increased support from the middle-income group. Of the 62 countries pledging, 14 increased their contributions (five by 7 per cent or more); 35 maintained previous levels and one decreased its contribution; 11 returned as donors and one country pledged for the first time. Nineteen countries indicated payment schedules and 10 indicated multi-year pledges.

5. As of 30 September 2003, UNICEF had recorded regular resources income of $372 million from government donors and intergovernmental agencies against financial plan projections of $400 million. Total regular resources income from all sources for 2003 is projected at $640 million with the level of government regular resources contributions in line with financial plan estimates. Private sector contributions are expected to be above their targets. Also as of 30 September, other resources contributions recorded from Governments were $541 million (regular, $244 million and emergency, $297 million) against the financial plan projection of $560 million. Total other resources income from was $700 million against the 2003 plan target of $760 million. If this trend were sustained for the entire year, 2003 income would exceed the plan, largely due to increased emergency contributions.

6. The Executive Board has discussed several times the importance of increasing the level of regular resources to enable UNICEF to perform its core functions, to help build 'A World Fit for Children' and to contribute to achieving the global goals of the Millennium Declaration and other international agreements. UNICEF depends on these unrestricted resources to have an effective global presence, to provide continuity in its work and to respond to new and emerging needs of children and women, including those related to emergency preparedness and initial response. UNICEF is hopeful that the commitments made by Governments at the International Conference on Financing for Development will result in increased support to multilateral agencies and social activities, as the impact of economic crises and poverty is disproportionately borne by children and denial of opportunities at an early age may cause irreversible damage.

7. To this end, UNICEF encourages all Member States to increase their annual voluntary contributions to regular resources and for those in a position to do so to provide multi-year commitments and payment schedules at the pledging event held at the first regular session of the Executive Board. Additionally, Member States from high- and middle-income countries are encouraged to contribute to core resources commensurate with their capacities, so as to avoid the increasing overdependence of UNICEF on a limited number of donors.

C. Capacity-building

8. Strengthening national, subnational and local capacities for the achievement of results is a central strategy for UNICEF programmes of cooperation, and is reinforced by the human rights-based approach to programming. At country level, UNICEF-assisted programmes are designed to build capacities to analyse the situation of children and women in relation to national development goals and human rights standards, especially those of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; and to support national capacities for codifying obligations arising from these treaties in relevant policies, legislation and programmes. These efforts form part of the overall effort by the United Nations to strengthen national institutions.

Through its cooperation, UNICEF also assists countries to mobilize the material, human and knowledge-based resources needed to ensure that policies related to children's and women's rights are implemented and legislation is enforced.

9. In 2003, UNICEF provided technical, financial and other support to national institutions in some 40 countries in their statutory reporting on the implementation of one or both Conventions. Training and awareness-raising with judicial officials, police officers, teachers, youth workers and community members on the content and implications of these Conventions was also an important area of UNICEF support. Members of children's rights clubs and youth parliaments have also been trained, and radio programmes are used to engage and stimulate young people on issues affecting them.

10. UNICEF also cooperates widely with national commissions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) involved in monitoring children's and women's rights, as well as supporting reviews of national legislation for conformity with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In 2003, support was provided to over 60 countries in their strengthening of legislation and policies relating to children, including for the drafting of children's codes and reform of juvenile justice systems. Other significant areas of national policy and legal reform supported by UNICEF include the promotion of breastfeeding, salt iodization and birth registration; the protection of orphaned children; and the prevention of child trafficking and exploitative labour.

11. UNICEF continues to promote strengthening of national and subnational monitoring of key indicators of child survival, growth and development. Many of these indicators are also now being used for tracking progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. These activities have focused on the need for reliable data and helping countries fill data gaps through the use of tools such as the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS). Many United Nations country teams and government partners have begun to work in this area and are using the *ChildInfo* software, developed by UNICEF, to support monitoring activities. The broad acceptance of *ChildInfo* led to agreement within UNDG to develop and promote *DevInfo* as a single software tool to be used by country teams across all agencies. While support to the analysis of trends in public spending on essential services for children and women has so far been more limited, this is expected to be an area of greater focus in future UNICEF cooperation, drawing on experience from promising initiatives in South Africa and parts of Latin America.

12. UNICEF has also strengthened its focus on programmatic capacity development in specific priorities of its medium-term strategic plan (MTSP). In countries with a high prevalence of HIV and AIDS, the focus is increasingly on developing capacities at community level to cope with the epidemic and its effects, including the growing numbers of orphaned children. Moving from an emphasis on vertical message delivery to the promotion of local mechanisms for dialogue has helped communities to identify the most vulnerable people and immediate actions that can be taken to protect them. Activities to support community capacity have been complemented by UNICEF support to countries for the development of strategies and action plans for orphans and other children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS. To date, an estimated 31 countries have strategies in place and a further 30 countries are developing them.

13. Community skills and participation mechanisms are also promoted as a means of achieving and sustaining development results in many programmatic initiatives, including those for girls' education, primary health care, clean water and improved sanitation. At the national level, priority areas for support to strengthening of capacity under the MTSP also include planning and procurement for vaccine needs; programmes for improving the school learning environment for both girls and boys; cross-sectoral policies for young children; and systems for monitoring the protection of the most vulnerable. Further detailed information on UNICEF support to national capacity development in the five priority areas of the MTSP will be provided in part II of the Executive Director's annual report, to be presented at the annual session of the Executive Board.

14. Recent programmatic evaluations in Mozambique, Myanmar, Togo and Uganda have highlighted the suitability of the current country-based programming process for capacity-building; the importance of intersectoral collaboration; the continued need to situate training activities within a broader capacity-building strategy; and the importance of monitoring and information collection as an object of and process for capacity-building.

15. Mechanisms for effective capacity-building are part a flexible programming approach with logically linked interventions at different levels addressing complementary objectives under an overall goal. The country programme offers a framework within which to define a capacity-building strategy with a clear sense of intended beneficiaries.

16. An orientation to the level of communities can guide programme partners in their improvements of overall capacity-building strategies towards a better marriage of bottom-up and top-down approaches. One of the lessons learned is that shifting responsibility for development to the community level can be a complex and extended process and requires considerable technical, administrative and financial support. A highly participatory programme can create consensus at national level on the most appropriate strategies to follow for implementation at local government and community levels.

17. Training continues to be an appropriate and key element of a capacity-building strategy. However, more attention must be given to identifying and responding to exogenous performance constraints and to the broader network within which organizations act. In a major evaluation of 18 training programmes in four sectors, training results were found to be frequently undermined by barriers at the level of organizational performance. Problems included trainees overburdened with responsibilities, motivational issues and such resource constraints as low wages, poor equipment, recruitment problems and staff turnover. Increased attention needs to be given by cooperating partners to situating training within a broader capacity-building strategy.

18. Studies have shown that a lack of basic information severely limits the capacity of local government to plan for ways to improve the situation of women and children. For this reason, capacity-building in information management at all levels of government will continue as a high priority for UNICEF. Capacity-building interventions which focus on systems for resource allocation, planning and information management appear to have contributed positively towards a greater awareness within institutions of the issues affecting children's and women's well-being and rights.

D. The resident coordinator system

19. The improved competency assessment for resident coordinators continued to be implemented in 2003, when 36 candidates underwent the assessment (23 from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), eight from other United Nations agencies and five external candidates). Reflecting active efforts at increasing diversity in the pool, 42 per cent of the candidates were women and 50 per cent were from the South. In a recent round of the Inter-Agency Advisory Panel (IAAP) for six resident coordinator posts, six candidates were from UNDP and nine were from five other agencies. The IAAP continues to meet regularly to ensure that lead times between a vacancy occurring and the identification and placement of a candidate are reduced.

20. Despite some improvements, the selection process continues to face three major problems: a sustained addressing of the gender and North/South balances; finding candidates with a development and humanitarian profile necessary for many emergency country situations; and, in some cases, delays in getting government agreements. Often, solutions are "zero sum" in that improvements in the diversity of the resident coordinator nominations can result in depleted diversity in nominating agencies. With increasing numbers of crisis countries, additional candidates with competencies and skills in handling such situations are required throughout the system. Despite such greater demands for humanitarian expertise, good personnel policy should not relegate staff members with crisis-handling competencies to a career of non-family hardship postings. Taking into account the full dimension of these and other complexities, the UNDG remains seized of the issues and continues aggressively to seek optimum solutions.

21. The competency assessment currently in use was designed in 2001 and has been assessed as effective and relevant. Nevertheless, the UNDG regularly reviews the assessment model. Based on feedback and lessons from candidates and UNDG members, the assessment system is refined and improved on an annual basis.

22. UNICEF is an active partner in the resident coordinator system. Presently, four UNICEF staff members (two men and two women) function as resident coordinators. In addition, UNICEF nominated three candidates for the assessment (one woman and two men). Participation in and contribution to the resident coordinator system is now a core responsibility of UNICEF representatives and senior managers at the country level.

23. UNICEF representatives increasingly are being called upon to lead and coordinate the Common Country Assessment (CCA)/United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) processes under the harmonized country programming and approval procedures adopted by UNICEF, UNDP, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Food Programme (WFP). They continue to play an active role in leadership of theme groups and are increasingly being called upon to assume functions of resident coordinator or humanitarian coordinator ad interim. By way of examples, the UNICEF Representative in the Russian Federation functioned as the Humanitarian Coordinator and the UNICEF Representative in Angola is presently the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator a.i.

24. In addition, UNICEF senior managers at the country level are being called upon to play key roles within the resident coordinator system in post-conflict

transition countries. In Iraq, UNICEF played the lead role in coordinating the needs assessment for reconstruction on behalf of the United Nations system with the World Bank, and the UNICEF country office led the needs assessment exercise for water and sanitation while playing a key role in the assessment of priority needs for education, health and nutrition. The UNICEF team in Liberia will play a key role in the needs assessment for recovery and reconstruction, leading in the sectors of education and water and sanitation, while contributing to the assessment of priorities in health and nutrition, governance, return, repatriation and reintegration of internally displaced persons and refugees and demobilization of combatants (with a focus on child soldiers).

E. The Common Country Assessment and United Nations Development Assistance Framework

25. At its 2003 annual session, the Executive Board considered new country programmes for five countries — Benin, Ecuador, Kenya, Niger and Pakistan — as the first programmes of cooperation considered by the respective Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP under the harmonized programme preparation and approval process approved in 2002. All five county programme documents were developed on the basis of the CCAs and UNDAFs prepared for the countries during the previous year when, for the first time, these two instruments had become *a priori* integral parts of the country programming process. Although experiences varied among the five countries, the direct linkages between UNDAFs and draft country programmes were evident in all cases.

26. During 2003, the process of developing country programmes on the basis of a prior agreed UNDAF was significantly enhanced with the introduction of the UNDAF results matrix. Developed as a result of the work of UNDG on simplification and harmonization as a way of strengthening the linkage between the UNDAF and the country programmes of participating agencies, the new matrix, which uses harmonized results-based terminology, has proved to be an important tool for country teams. Although formally introduced for use by the five roll-out countries after most had completed draft UNDAFs, it was nevertheless an important tool in helping agencies to finalize country programmes and showed great promise for the future.

27. Since then, the new matrix has become an integral part of the process of preparing the UNDAFs, including for the additional 16 roll-out countries for 2003. By focusing on outcomes, outputs and results at various levels of hierarchy and stages of programme development, the matrix also helps to identify those areas where agencies need to work together in pursuit of common objectives and helps to identify opportunities for value-added joint programming. Experience is showing, however, that country teams will need to adopt a more strategic and results-oriented approach if the matrix is to realize its full potential for linking UNDAF objectives and results more closely with preparation of individual agencies' country programmes.

28. Following completion of the 2002 roll-out and associated experiences and lessons learned, the UNDG updated the CCA/UNDAF guidelines. Completed in October 2003, the consolidated update was released in time for use in the initial training and orientation of the 16 country teams undertaking CCAs and UNDAFs in 2003.

29. The continuously improving and timely guidance coupled with training and other quality assurance support has led to a notable improvement in the quality of the CCAs and UNDAFs in terms of both products and processes. Nevertheless, differences in quality remain and additional targeted efforts are required to enable all country teams to produce high-quality CCAs and UNDAFs. One of the most important lessons learned in the past two years is that the quality of the process and product is directly related to the leadership exercised by the resident coordinator and the other agency heads at country level. Concerns remain that the process is too time-consuming and that the varying capacities of country teams and member agencies need to be taken into greater account. Questions also remain regarding the participation of United Nations agencies which do not use a country programme approach for their collaboration with national Governments and for which the UNDAF therefore is not seen as an essential tool.

30. During 2003, UNICEF continued to play a very active role in the process of updating and improving the guidance as well as the support provided to United Nations country teams. UNICEF staff chaired the UNDG Working Group on CCA/UNDAF and Country Support which led the review and dissemination of lessons learned from ongoing processes. Issues and actions emerging from the Secretary-General's reform proposals were also taken into account by this group. All guidelines continue to be regarded as "works in progress" supplemented by lessons learned, best practices and good examples from ongoing in-country work, all of which are now available on the UNDG web site (www.undg.org).

31. UNICEF continued to work with the UNDG structures on training issues to ensure that country teams receive systematic and high-quality support on their country-level exercises. In the initial orientation of country team members provided to the 2003 and 2004 roll-out countries, UNICEF staff were involved in both the design of content and materials, as resource persons and as members of the country teams that were trained. In addition, UNICEF again provided carefully selected participants in the two training courses for CCA/UNDAF resource persons and facilitators, a number of whom were subsequently used for inter-agency country-level support and training missions. During 2003, their focus was on helping country teams to strengthen the UNDAF process, particularly through better priority-setting and definition of results-oriented outcomes. UNDAF "Prioritization Workshops" were organized for all the 2003 roll-out countries.

32. A major lesson learned from the 2003 roll-out was that countries need specific and early support for their CCA processes. Problems related to quality and depth of analysis emerged in several CCAs. While countries were encouraged to have country-level orientation on the CCA and UNDAF supported by trained resource persons and facilitators, this limited training is clearly inadequate for some country teams. Generally, it was in the detailed process of organizing the CCA process and carrying out in-depth analysis that several teams fell short. This will require timely additional and appropriate support — not always readily available — to country teams in need. While consultants can sometimes fill the gap, this approach can distort the process and undermine ownership.

33. Another important aspect of the support offered to country teams was the development of a UNDG Quality Support and Assurance System. While responsibility for the quality of the CCA and UNDAF rests ultimately with the country teams and their partners, the regional entities of agencies are responsible for

ensuring that adequate technical support is provided during the process, and agency headquarters need to provide quality assurance from a global perspective. These three levels of accountability form the core of the Quality Support and Assurance System introduced by UNDG for the 2003 roll-out. This included quality assurance checklists and templates for use by country teams as well as by regional oversight/support teams and those at global level.

34. In 2003, in addressing the regional dimension of accountability, the four UNDG Executive Committee members agreed to a "lead agency" concept for ensuring coordinated provision of support and oversight to the country teams in each region, particularly for timely reviews of draft CCA and UNDAF documents. UNDP took the lead for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS) and South Asia, the UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office in Bangkok organized the process in East Asia and UNFPA took the lead in Africa. This exercise provided valuable lessons in both the technical and logistical aspects. Quite apart from the variations in the coverage of agencies' assigned regions, when the effort is made to provide coordinated regional support and oversight, the difference in authority and accountability between regional bureaux located at headquarters, regional offices located in the regions and regional technical structures has created issues requiring resolution.

35. An important aspect of the support process in 2003 was the role played by the Working Group on CCA/UNDAF and Support to Country Teams, mandated by the UNDG not only to take responsibility for updating the CCA/UNDAF guidelines and helping to ensure the implementation of the Quality Support and Assurance System but also to maintain global oversight of the CCA/UNDAF roll-out. With the support of the United Nations Development Group Office (UNDGO), the UNDG Working Group on Training and the United Nations System Staff College regularly reviewed progress in each country against a set of key milestones including training activities, steps in the review and support process and completion dates. Issues requiring action were followed up through each agency's regional or programme entities or through UNDGO. While these headquarters-oriented groups will continue to accompany the roll-out process from a global perspective, it is expected that regional entities will take on an increasing role in monitoring the process in their regions and in organizing appropriate action in support of countries, organizing training activities and resolving specific problems and issues as they emerge.

F. Simplification and harmonization of programmes and procedures

36. Work on the simplification and harmonization of operational policies and procedures continued throughout 2003 with a view to completion of the current phase in accordance with deadlines established by General Assembly resolution 56/201 of 21 December 2001 on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, and the Secretary-General's latest reform initiative. In addition to the actions and tools identified above as part of the CCA/UNDAF process, UNDG members also have agreed to use at country level a joint strategy meeting to initiate the planning process for the preparation of country programmes of cooperation.

37. The four Executive Committee agencies also have established a series of harmonized instruments to support the development and implementation of country programmes. Each agency is preparing a country programme action plan, laying out

in common format and terminology its country programme for the next five-year cycle. These countries will also prepare annual work plans in accordance with a common format, terminology and timing. A standard progress report is also being introduced. Following implementation in the five countries starting new programmes in 2004, the new tools will be extended to 16 countries beginning in 2005 and, following a feedback and refinement process, to a further 19 countries in 2006 and 45 more countries in 2007. The introduction of these harmonized tools and instruments is linked to the countries' programme cycles.

38. Work continues on common resource transfer modalities and joint programming and pooling of resources with a view to reaching agreement among UNDG Executive Committee members in early 2004 and issuing new guidance to country teams. UNICEF has participated actively both in all the simplification and harmonization developmental work on the programming side and in the work related to financial procedures and modalities.

39. Ensuring the widest possible "buy-in" of participating organizations has suffused all stages of planning, development and implementation of the new tools. UNICEF has established reference groups at headquarters and in the field to ensure adequate consultation and early acceptance of key issues. Simplification and harmonization are incorporated into regular orientation and training activities for UNICEF staff at all levels and are standing items on the agendas of regional and global management teams. Inter-agency briefings were held in New York and Rome for headquarters-based staff of the UNDG agencies in New York and Europe respectively.

40. Government delegations and relevant intergovernmental bodies have been kept fully informed through regular briefings and inclusion of simplification and harmonization as a regular feature at meetings of individual Executive Boards as well as at joint meetings, and through panels conducted at meetings of the Economic and Social Council.

41. While UNDG Executive Committee members have spearheaded the simplification and harmonization process and are bound by the outcomes, every effort has been made to involve other UNDG members having a programmatic presence at country level. While not formally bound by decisions of the Executive Committee, specialized agencies are regular participants in the working groups developing the required instruments and are briefed regularly as to progress and decisions taken. There is now a de facto acceptance by all agencies of the United Nations system that UNDG serves as the inter-agency mechanism for coordination and harmonization of field-level operational activities. Specialized agencies remain active members of UNDG, fully committed to the principles of simplification and harmonization and adopting common practices whenever practical and appropriate. However, specialized agencies are subject to their own intergovernmental structures and often have country activities based on global rather then country programmes.

G. Monitoring, evaluation and indicators

42. Following the Executive Board's endorsement of the report on the evaluation function in the context of the MTSP (decision 2002/9, E/ICEF/2002/34/Rev.1) as a policy statement, UNICEF has intensified its support to programme countries in evaluating their programmes and in strengthening national evaluation capacities. Based on evaluation policy principles of universality, country ownership and

decentralization, UNICEF has worked to ensure the participation of national authorities in the drafting of terms of reference, the develop of methodologies and indicators and the formation of evaluation teams conducting studies at national level. This activity has served to enhance national ownership and support national capacity-building efforts.

43. In 2003, a senior-level Evaluation Committee was created to advise the Executive Director on evaluation matters and to provide oversight of the evaluation function. The Committee's mandate is to review evaluation reports produced by UNICEF that have relevance at the global governance level and to endorse the recommendations contained in the reports. The Committee will review the annual follow-up reports on the implementation of recommendations. It also examines the work of the Evaluation Office and clears the release of reports to the public domain. The Evaluation Committee adopted rules and procedures that clarify the accountabilities for the evaluation function at all levels of the organization as well as its own modus operandi. All these measures have strengthened significantly the role of evaluation practice within UNICEF programmes of cooperation.

44. Three specific measures were taken to further build the evaluation capacity of programme countries. First, training workshops were held as part of ongoing evaluations so as to disseminate results-based approaches to programming and evaluation. Second, integrated monitoring and evaluation planning within the country programme management plan was promoted through workshops and inclusion in the UNDG harmonized and simplified country programming cycle. As part of this exercise, UNICEF developed an internal handbook on understanding results-based approaches to country programming. Finally, UNICEF supported the formation and development of regional and national evaluation associations. Such associations facilitate professional exchange among members from the public and private sectors, NGOs, academic institutions and international organizations. Evaluation associations have also proven very useful in building national capacities through the dissemination of training modules.

45. In compliance with a multi-year evaluation plan in support of the MTSP, evaluation work was conducted in areas related to HIV/AIDS and education as prevention against child labour. An assessment of *ChildInfo* was also completed. The Evaluation Office conducted an evaluation of the programmes of cooperation for Mauritius, the Pacific Island Countries and Peru. These country cases are part of an effort to develop and test a broad-based methodology for evaluation of country programmes. By year 2005, regional offices will assume full responsibility for the conduct of country programme evaluations. A tool was also developed allowing for real-time evaluation of UNICEF responses to country programmes in early crisis phase in unstable conditions. These various activities are also designed to facilitate UNICEF moving its focus of evaluation from the project level to the evaluation of programmes and strategic themes.

46. In order to strengthen evaluation capacity-building within UNICEF, a meta-evaluation of the quality of evaluations performed by the country offices together with national authorities was completed, identifying areas where improvement is required. A competency profile for evaluation officers in country offices was developed and will serve as a guide for present incumbents, helping them to identify their professional development needs, and also as a technical reference for the recruitment of new officers.

47. Overall, the functions of monitoring and evaluation and the development, measurement and analysis of indicators are closely interlinked with key UNICEF activities in capacity-building, the follow-up to international conferences and programme planning and implementation.

H. Gender mainstreaming

48. UNICEF continues to mainstream a gender perspective in all areas of its work as a key part of the broader rights-based approach to programming that is central to UNICEF activities and is now integrated into all major programme guidance and training materials. In the MTSP for 2002-2005, UNICEF recognized that the rights, equality and empowerment of women are particularly important to the creation of healthy families, communities and nations and has since disseminated checklists containing strategic gender issues for each of the five priority areas. An important initiative that took place in 2003 with a view to further integrating gender into the MTSP was a study highlighting the importance of working with men and boys for gender equality if the goals of the MTSP are to be met.

49. At country level, UNICEF is acting to mainstream gender within country programmes of cooperation and to promote an increased focus on gender issues within the United Nations system. Recognizing the importance of gender-disaggregated data for analysis and greater visibility of girls' issues, UNICEF continues to support the increased availability of such data through the MICS and other data collection tools. Also, acknowledging that gender stereotypes and inequality fuel the HIV/AIDS pandemic and that young women and girls are particularly vulnerable to HIV infection, UNICEF offices are increasingly stressing the gender dimension of HIV/AIDS.

50. As an active member of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, UNICEF has participated in the discussions on gender equality and the Millennium Development Goals leading to a workshop organized by the World Bank in November 2003. UNICEF is also a member of an inter-agency task force on CCA/UNDAF and gender, led by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), which has supported the revision of the general guidelines with a view to strengthening the gender aspect as well as commissioning the preparation of a resource guide for United Nations theme groups on gender.

51. UNICEF also participates in the Inter-Agency Task Team on Gender and HIV/AIDS, where its playing an active role in the preparation of a resource package on gender and HIV/AIDS to be launched in March 2004. In 2003, the Secretary-General requested the Executive Director to lead a task force on women, girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa, which has focused on issues of HIV prevention among girls and young women, girls' education, gender-based violence and its links to HIV, property and inheritance rights, the role of women and girls in care, and access to care and treatment for women. Its aim is to catalyse and intensify action on women, girls and HIV/AIDS and position the issue as a priority for the United Nations system, Governments and civil society.

52. Recognizing the need for specific attention to crisis and transition situations, UNICEF participated in a workshop organized jointly by the United Nations and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development-Development Assistance Committee on gender and post-conflict reconstruction, drawing on experiences from

Afghanistan and elsewhere to identify challenges and good practices for achieving equitable, gender-sensitive reconstruction processes.

53. UNICEF has also revised its internal guidelines for participation in the Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP), emphasizing gender as a cross-cutting issue. As Co-Chair of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Task Force on Gender and Humanitarian Assistance, UNICEF has led work on ensuring a strong gender equality perspective and a clear focus on both the capacities and vulnerabilities of women and girls. A training module on capacities and vulnerability analysis is now part of the CAP training manual. The Task Force is also assessing the extent to which gender perspectives are mainstreamed in the CAP. In addition, it has worked with UNIFEM to prepare a checklist on key gender dimensions for the UNDG working group on Iraq, to contribute to the planning and assessment process as part of the Inter-Agency Integrated Humanitarian Preparedness and Response Plan for Iraq.

54. The IASC Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse has developed a plan of action on prevention and response mechanisms to address sexual abuse and exploitation in humanitarian crises. The plan identifies training as a critical aspect of prevention of sexual abuse and exploitation. In follow-up, UNICEF has developed a training package on preventing sexual exploitation and abuse.

I. Cooperation with the World Bank

55. UNICEF continued expanding its partnerships with the World Bank and other international financial institutions. UNICEF and the World Bank in particular enjoy a wide range of collaboration at the field and the headquarters levels in such areas as policy dialogue, joint technical support, development of programme guidelines, mainstreaming issues related to children in poverty reduction strategies, joint conferences and workshops, procurement of good and services and implementation of projects in post-conflict situations.

56. UNICEF and the World Bank have also worked together more closely with the emergence of common programme goals through the Millennium Development Goals and the common programme framework of the poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP), and recognize each others' comparative advantages and complementarities. Opportunities for cooperation have increased with the launch of larger grant facilities in the 13th Replenishment of the International Development Association (IDA) and the LICUS Initiative (Assistance to Low-Income Countries Under Stress), as well as the Bank's increased involvement in social issues and post-conflict situations.

57. The latest such case was the joint development of Iraq *Watching Briefs* for the health, education, water and social protection sectors which drew on the long and extensive experience of UNICEF in those sectors in Iraq. These efforts contributed to the United Nations/World Bank Joint Needs Assessment for Iraq, and provided the donor community with a comprehensive overview of short- and long-term development requirements and reconstruction needs. UNICEF is expanding its work with the World Bank in post-conflict and other difficult situations, including in countries that are part of the LICUS Initiative. In southern Sudan, after the peace agreement, UNICEF and the World Bank have started capacity-building efforts for delivery of basic services. In such post-conflict/crisis countries as Albania, Kosovo

(Serbia and Montenegro) and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Bank is funding programmes developed by UNICEF for early childhood to fill existing gaps in social services.

58. UNICEF and the World Bank have jointly advocated for common goals and provided technical support on key issues. In the education sector, a ministerial-level workshop on investment options for Education for All involving 24 countries was jointly funded and organized in Burkina Faso for the Western and Central African region. The focus was on exploring changes in investment patterns for national and external resources, in order to better address such educational disparities as those between genders, and rural, urban and poor communities. A second regional workshop was jointly organized for the Eastern and Southern African region on sector-wide approaches to development (SWAPs) and mainstreaming/scaling-up of investments in education.

59. In the health sector, the World Bank, the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF developed the "marginal budgeting for bottleneck" (MBB) tool. This important new mechanism first identifies implementation constraints in the health system that must be removed to optimize expected health outcomes and then estimates the marginal costs of overcoming these constraints. The MBB thus helps Governments to formulate medium-term national or regional expenditure plans as well as PRSPs that explicitly link expenditure to Millennium Development Goals for health, such as the reduction in child and maternal mortality, and optimally allocate newly available resources to the achievement of specific targets. It facilitates a process of budgeting for government health expenditures that starts by improving allocation efficiency of newly available resources, and provides a basis for policy dialogue and planning. In Mali and Mauritania, this type of collaboration resulted in the formulation of medium-term expenditure frameworks and in Madagascar it supported the preparation of provincial expenditure plans.

60. UNICEF and the World Bank jointly issued *Early Childhood Development and HIV/AIDS*, a practical guideline for the care of small children affected by HIV/AIDS that has been widely welcomed by development partners and will result in specific operational collaboration in selected countries. A recent joint study on PRSPs, sectoral investment policies, SWAPs, children and HIV/AIDS is expected to yield important results for the enhanced contribution of these planning frameworks to the well-being of children.

61. UNICEF also provided its procurement and programme facilities to the World Bank to more effectively use resources for children. During the last year, UNICEF worked with the World Bank, WHO, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Rotary International and the United Nations Foundation to enable an innovative use of a public-private partnership to "buy-down" an IDA credit to procure oral polio vaccines in Nigeria and Pakistan. UNICEF has also been utilizing IDA credits to build recipient countries' capacities while ensuring effective delivery of services. For example, in Bangladesh, UNICEF utilized IDA funds for procurement of basic health kits and implementation of HIV/AIDS projects within a SWAP framework, implementation of a large-scale quality of education project, and management of the national nutrition project. Similar activities were implemented in Azerbaijan and Yemen.

62. In several cases, the World Bank provided funds to existing UNICEF programmes to achieve specific goals, or to successful model projects developed by

UNICEF and the Government to help their going to scale. As UNICEF and the Bank have increasingly collaborated closely from an early stage of programme development, there are now more cases of joint programming within a coordinated framework and, in these areas, a greater opportunity for World Bank financial support through UNICEF programmes.

63. Since 2000, the World Bank, the International Labour Organization and UNICEF have been partners in Understanding Children's Work, a child labour research project based at the Innocenti Research Centre which aims to fill knowledge gaps and build capacity on child labour research. Cooperation with the World Bank has been most marked at the country level in various national child labour studies, including those in Morocco and Yemen, where the Bank's involvement has helped to put child labour more firmly on the national agenda. The three agencies have collaborated in training programmes to improve national data collection on child labour indicators and statistics.

II. Follow-up to international conferences

64. UNICEF has participated actively with United Nations partners in the development of the system-wide framework for the integrated and coordinated follow-up to the Millennium Declaration and the outcome documents of the other recent international conferences and General Assembly Special Sessions. UNICEF, because of its mandate, which encompasses many of the goals and targets established by this process, and its relevant field expertise in programme implementation, is able to play a leading role in many parts of this process. UNICEF has also based its MTSP agenda on appropriate elements of the conference goals and targets and thus incorporated these outcomes into its programmes of support to Governments in national implementation efforts.

65. The Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, building on the Millennium Development Goals, introduced several new goals that required integration into earlier frameworks, as well as a clearer definition of interrelationships among sectors and of potential synergies. In particular, for the water and sanitation targets — without an existing lead agency — there was a need for a viable mechanism for inter-agency coordination/collaboration and linkages to health and education. UNICEF, a leader in the earlier establishment of UN Water, played a key role in formulating the system-wide plan to use this existing machinery to develop plans for follow up to the World Summit in the water and sanitation sector, and in developing arrangements for the progressive and effective participation of non-United Nations actors.

66. The range of issues and stakeholders encompassed by the Monterrey Consensus was particularly well suited for follow-up in the context of the CEB and UNDG machinery. UNICEF, like other operational agencies, has a particular concern with the adequacy of resources for implementing conference outcomes. Issues related to new global alliances and partnerships between developed and developing countries, with the potential for resource additionality preconditioned on performance and increased use of global funds and other non-United Nations multilateral channels, could have a significant impact on the capacity of UNICEF and other operational agencies to support Governments in their efforts to reach agreed targets. The ongoing inter-agency dialogue is directed at policy coherence

within the United Nations system and on approaches to advocacy, policy development and advice, and programme delivery. The focus of UNICEF remains on actions and impact at the country level.

67. The measurement of results, clear accountabilities and meaningful attribution will provide the basis for success of the United Nations system in supporting Governments in their implementation of the agreed goals and targets. Over the years, UNICEF has accumulated considerable expertise and experience in data gathering and analysis and *ChildInfo* is currently used in more than 50 countries world-wide. *DevInfo* (see para. 11 above) will be launched in early 2004.

68. As part of the Millennium Campaign, UNICEF staff are participating in three of the ten thematically oriented task forces with regular reviews of progress by the UNDG. UNICEF has also participated actively in supporting many of the some 40 (of the year-end target of 100) country reports on implementation of the Millennium Development Goals that had been completed by mid-September 2003.

69. Much of the work in which UNICEF is engaged in overall follow-up is directed towards the 2005 comprehensive review of the implementation of the Millennium Declaration. This work will represent a system-wide approach to the three major themes of peace and security, human rights and governance, and development and protection of the environment, emphasizing interrelationships among the issues, newly emerging issues derived from the recent challenges to multilateralism and innovative forward-looking conclusions. An objective of UNICEF in this exercise will be to ensure a high level of country input.

Follow up to the General Assembly Special Session on Children

70. UNICEF has worked with other United Nations agencies system to ensure that the follow up to the Special Session on Children is coordinated and fully integrated into the implementation of the outcomes of the other major conferences and summits. Follow-up has focused on collaboration and coordination through a range of interventions, including programmatic and policy support; advocacy; communication strategies; resource mobilization; developing partnerships and alliances with civil society; and support to Governments in their national and subnational reviews of progress.

71. The translation of the goals and targets of *A World Fit for Children* into country-level plans for support to Governments is being achieved through their incorporation into the UNDAF process, with resultant agency programmes reflecting outcomes in accordance with respective mandates. The UNDG has also been working with the World Bank and several bilateral agencies to include the agenda of *A World Fit for Children* and the Millennium Development Goals into poverty reduction strategies and SWAPs.

72. A broad alliance of United Nations agencies is collaborating with UNICEF and has taken specific actions to support the agenda and goals of *A World Fit for Children*. The World Health Assembly has endorsed new strategic directions for child and adolescent health and development. The strategy, consistent with the goals of *A World Fit for Children*, brings together crucial activities to reduce childhood deaths and long-term disability. The WHO, together with the United Nations Environment Programme, UNICEF and other partners, launched the Healthy

Environments for Children Alliance at the World Summit on Sustainable Development to intensify global action on environmental risks to children's health.

73. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and WFP contribute to achieving nutrition-related goals and have been working with other United Nations agencies to address the basic and underlying causes of childhood malnutrition. UNICEF and WFP have developed a minimum package of school feeding, health and education interventions that is being delivered to school children.

74. The close correspondence of *A World Fit for Children* with the Millennium Development Goals and the coordinated follow-up process to international conferences facilitate monitoring of progress by various United Nations agencies. The annual reports of the Secretary-General on progress towards the Millennium Development Goals have reinvigorated existing collaborative efforts in monitoring activities in the areas of health, education, environment, poverty reduction and sustainable development within the United Nations system. The *Human Development Report* helps to keep a country-by-country "score card" of progress towards those goals.

75. In the promotion of healthy lives, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO and the World Bank help countries to improve collection and use of data on health systems and outcomes. In the field of basic education, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNICEF and the World Bank have strengthened their collaboration in monitoring data collection. FAO, UNICEF and WFP collaborate in the areas of nutrition and food security.